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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**FORCIBLE ENTRY FROM THE SEA: OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS TOOLS
AND TECHNIQUES FOR EXECUTION IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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ABSTRACT

FORCIBLE ENTRY FROM THE SEA: OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR EXECUTION IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT

An opposed Amphibious Assault capability provides the operational commander with options that are not achievable with other service capabilities. The operational commander achieves deterrence, quick response and flexibility with a forcible entry capability. This paper utilizes past forcible entry case studies to illustrate operational functions that led to successful operations. It will analyze current amphibious platforms, supporting assets and technology to illustrate weaknesses and strengths in the current capabilities. The paper will highlight current threats that face a forcible entry force and characteristics that will cause problems during these operations.

The paper will then analyze and incorporate operational functions that will provides solutions for mitigating risk to landing craft weaknesses and how U.S. current capabilities and technology can be leveraged against present threats in order to provide the operational commander with a viable option to utilize the existing forcible entry capability. It concludes with the determination that forcible entry operations are feasible with the integration of operational functions and inter-service synchronization.

Introduction

Forcible entry is a viable option for the operational commander with the joint synchronization of intelligence, fires, and maneuver. There will always be a requirement to maintain a forcible entry capability from the sea against various threats to U.S. national security interests. This fact is even more evident now with the current world situation and the potential that foreign countries may deny U.S. access to land bases that have allowed the massing of troops and equipment for land-based campaigns over the last two decades. The vast majority of locations with U.S. interests has access from the littoral regions and may necessitate the execution of a forcible entry from the sea as the only option at the commencement of hostilities. This necessity requires the U.S. to project power from the sea to a place and time of its choosing with the assets and capabilities that are currently possessed.¹ The threat environment defined for forcible entry operations in this paper extend across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO) excluding high intensity conflict with near-peer competitors. High intensity conflict with near-peer competitors is beyond the scope of this paper.

The belief and writing of numerous military officers propose that forcible entry from the sea is not viable due to threat technology, lack of amphibious lift, and vulnerability of landing craft.² This paper will refute the narrow view of those that believe forcible entry would not be successful. The opposing view does not take into account the technology and joint capabilities that can be leveraged against the threats, and vulnerabilities in current resources. Opposed amphibious landings present difficult operational challenges. Forcible entry must be maintained to compel potential enemies to defend everywhere that a landing can occur. The dispersion of threat forces caused by maintaining a forcible entry capability

creates opportunities through the concentration of resources in joint operations and synchronization of intelligence and leveraging of operational fires. These functions, coordinated with maneuver, limit the exposure and risk to landing forces making forcible entry from the sea a viable option for the operational commander to defeat the unpredictable threats that will emerge in the littoral environment.

Past Forcible Entry Operations

Analyzing the case study of the Inchon landing directly supports the argument of this paper by showing how the joint synchronization of intelligence, fires, and maneuver generated a successful outcome. The Inchon amphibious landing, Operation Chromite, occurred in 1950 at a time when the strength of the Marine Corps was reduced to 74,000, less than half the strength of our current force.³ The U.S. Navy was able to maintain amphibious ship lift for one division when the Korean War commenced.⁴ Due to force strengths at the time and reduced capabilities of the Marine Corps from post war drawdown, a joint/coalition force was assembled to execute the Inchon landing. The landing force was composed of Marine Corps, Army and coalition forces. The naval force was a coalition of 230 ships and 71,000 naval personnel with one division-sized element of land forces.⁵ There were many unknown factors for a landing at Inchon and a massive intelligence collection action was executed. To offset the risks and fill intelligence gaps, information was gathered and collated through clandestine Navy operations and aerial photography by navy assets and information from coalition partners to provide a detailed intelligence picture on tides and enemy defenses.⁶ Deception was extensively used to confuse the North Koreans in order to conceal the location of the landing. Prior to the fleet and landing force moving to the staging area for the assault the Navy obtained local air and sea control.⁷

Key lessons from an analysis of the Inchon landing are numerous, crucial, and remain relevant for conducting an amphibious operation today. Surprise was a key element to the success at Inchon. Although the North Koreans knew the U.S. had the potential to conduct an amphibious operation, there were too many possible landing areas to establish adequate coastal defenses to mass forces to repel a landing. The selection of Inchon as the landing site was viewed as unlikely due to severe tides and lack of landing beaches. The surprise achieved at Inchon provided protection to the landing force because there was limited coastal artillery, minimal naval mines, and inadequate forces defending in the proximity of the landing sites. These conditions allowed a rapid build-up of combat power ashore and a quick transition to offensive action in the enemy's rear area once the landing site was secured. The ability to mass forces in an area where the U.S. enjoyed sea superiority greatly contributed to success by providing operational protection during the vulnerable ship to shore phase of the operation. The combined utilization of all air and naval forces provided adequate fires to destroy major defensive positions and isolate the landing area. The massing of fires allowed a small force to penetrate into the enemy rear area and secure territory to allow the flow of follow-on forces for a major land offensive.⁸

Inter-service and coalition integration and cooperation provided the necessary forces to achieve the objective. At the time the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps did not have the force structure to independently execute the landing successfully, the objectives were achieved through the use of coalition amphibious ships and a division of ground forces from the Army. The landing demonstrates the contributions provided by joint and coalition forces to an amphibious operation executed on a truncated timeline. Operation Chromite demonstrated unity of effort to achieve success in an amphibious operation. Air and sea control was easily

achieved through a synchronized coalition effort that allowed essential close air support for the landing force. All intelligence assets were harnessed to support the amphibious landing. The joint intelligence assets provided precise targeting and tidal data, which allowed success in a risky operation.⁹ The conclusion to this analysis is that even with limited assets, synchronization of intelligence, fires and maneuver allows forcible entry from the sea as a viable option.

The second case that will be analyzed is the amphibious deception employed during Desert Storm in 1991. Although a forcible entry was not executed, this case also demonstrates the importance of synchronization of intelligence, fires, and maneuver. The feasibility of the amphibious assault and forcible entry capability became a more controversial issue after Desert Storm because the amphibious assault option was not used due to the anticipated high casualty estimates and difficulty in mine clearing operations. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen Al Grey, suggested that an amphibious assault in the current situation (Desert Storm) should be used only as a last resort and the capability is best utilized as a strategic reserve.¹⁰ There are many reasons for the campaign design decisions made during Desert Storm to not utilize the amphibious assault option. These reasons directly support the argument for retaining a forcible entry capability.

Desert Shield and Desert Storm was a large-scale success for the application and demonstration of joint warfare. Desert Storm commenced with an attack of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM) from U.S. Navy ships in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. The TLAMs were the first phase of a joint air campaign, which destroyed command and control, advanced anti-air assets and critical heavily defended targets. This initial phase allowed joint fixed wing strike aircraft of the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and coalition to destroy key

Iraqi capabilities and enabled a rapid successful ground campaign. The air assets afloat provided 35 percent of the strikes across an enormous area of Kuwait and Iraq.¹¹

Sea control was a key aspect of Desert Shield/Storm. The maritime movement of 90 percent of equipment and supplies for the conflict required sea control in the Persian Gulf.¹² The U.S. and coalition navies were successful in blockading Kuwait and Iraq and enforcing the embargo, which was a key contributor to the isolation of Iraq, denying them revenue from the sale of oil and preventing the importation of war material. Air superiority was also quickly achieved by the Coalition, destroying the Iraqi Air Force or forcing it to flee to neighboring countries. The Iraqi airfields were then targeted and rendered unusable for a limited duration with precision-guided munitions.¹³

The Navy/Marine Corps Team had an amphibious force that consisted of two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) and a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) embarked on 31 amphibious ships.¹⁴ Although there were numerous plans for conducting opposed amphibious assaults during Desert Storm, none were executed. Numerous, highly publicized amphibious exercises were conducted with coalition forces around the Middle East after Iraq invaded.¹⁵ This activity garnered an immediate reaction by Iraq with forces in Kuwait mounting significant coastal defenses, deploying multiple divisions along the coast and constructing an extensive naval mine field along the coast of Kuwait. The Iraqi leadership believed that the Coalition would conduct an amphibious assault to seize Kuwait from Iraqi control.¹⁶ The development of static coastal defenses, disposition of forces, and employment of mines were critical factors considered by the operational commander in not executing the amphibious assault. The mere threat of a credible amphibious assault generated the effect that the operational commander required. Sufficient land based forces were viewed as

capable of achieving the objectives without the potential high casualties predicted for an amphibious assault. Moreover, the embarked Marines lacked some of the inimitable assets required to support the amphibious force due to the priority and need to supply I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) ashore, specifically engineering equipment needed to clear minefields once ashore and logistic support assets. The required intelligence capability was also not available because the majority of assets were supporting the Marine Corps ground forces apportioned to the land campaign. Finally the required air assets, Naval Gunfire, and TLAMs to destroy coastal defensive positions to provide the protection needed for the amphibious assault force were unavailable.¹⁷ It was also not feasible to utilize the most beneficial aspect of an amphibious capability, surprise, given that the small coastline of Kuwait made it easy for Iraqi forces to establish integrated defenses across the majority of potential landing sites. Desert Storm demonstrated the importance of joint synchronized intelligence assets to provide targeting information on threats. The conflict demonstrated the effectiveness of synchronized fires to allow maneuver and reduce the risk to land forces. Even though there was not an amphibious assault, the operation demonstrated the capabilities of synchronization of intelligence, fires, and maneuver that could have supported a forcible entry option. The amphibious force did achieve its objective by pinning down substantial Iraqi forces thereby denying Iraqi's ability to mass forces against a single axis threat. Desert Storm clearly validates forcible entry as a viable option for the operational commander.

Current U.S. Amphibious Lift and Landing Craft Assets

It is important to analyze the U.S. amphibious ship capability in light of maintaining a future forcible entry capability. The finite number of amphibious ships supplies a limited force that can execute a forcible entry from the sea. The current amphibious ship total is 34

operational platforms.¹⁸ With the current numbers of amphibious ships, this mix would provide lift for two Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) equivalents to react to immediate tasking. Although the total lift capability is limited, two MEBs provide a considerable combat capability as a combined arms integrated air, ground, and support team. The two MEB force consists of; six infantry battalions, one tank battalion, one AAV battalion (able to carry two infantry battalions, one light armored vehicle (LAV) battalion, two artillery battalions, and approximately 2,000 wheeled vehicles. The air assets that could be carried on the amphibious shipping support 80 x AV-8B Harriers, 60 MV-22 Ospreys, 24 CH-53 heavy lift helicopters (assault support capable of lifting two infantry battalions), and 30 rotary wing close air support platforms.¹⁹ The current forcible entry capability could be used to seize a major port and proximate airfield facilities. By doing this, the assault element would establish a foothold and provide security for the flow of follow-on forces. The equipment and supplies for the immediate follow-on forces is carried by the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF), consisting of 17 ships to support three MEBs for 30 days of combat operations.²⁰ The MPF fleet requires a secure port facility or beach that has the appropriate beach gradient. The over-the-shore option is limited to coastal areas that have the required beach gradient and offload time is significantly reduced.²¹ Forces would flow into the secure airfield and marry up with MPF equipment and supplies. The three MPF MEBs provide increased combat power to reinforce the initial assault echelon.

Prior to the landing at Inchon, the U.S. relied on an attrition-based concept of amphibious warfare. This concept utilized significant numbers of ships against a defended coastline and beachhead, accepting the risk that a limited number of amphibious platforms would be lost during assault operations. With the current level of amphibious shipping

available, the U.S. seeks to limit its exposure to such risk for these limited assets. The most important conclusion in view of the constrained amphibious lift capability is the importance of protecting these limited assets.

It is also important to analyze the capabilities and limitations of landing craft and assault support aircraft that transports the initial assault echelons. The Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) and the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) limitations are slow speed and sufficient beach gradient, allowing access to only 17% of coastlines.²² Another limitation is the need for amphibious ships to close within visibility of the coast to launch the AAV and LCU, exposing the ships to threat weapons. This vulnerability requires effective targeting and destruction or suppression of the enemy defenses to protect the ships when entering the threat ring of the enemy weapons systems. These landing craft provide limited survivability from small arms weapon systems.

The Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) and MV-22 Osprey/ CH-53 assault support aircraft provide an over the horizon (OTH) ship to shore movement advantage. This advantage allows the amphibious ships to remain outside of the threat ring of most enemy weapons. LCAC and assault support aircraft provide no protection to the landing force during movement and rely on speed and maneuverability to bypass threats to minimize the risk to the landing force. These assets utilize their speed and range to land on less heavily defended areas, rapidly discharge its cargo, and return for additional forces and equipment. The LCAC operating characteristics allow access to 70 percent of the world's coastline.²³ Environmental advantages can also be leveraged, such as night assaults to provide protection from low technology threat weapons and increase the survivability of limited landing craft and amphibious ships. These vulnerabilities make it essential to synchronize intelligence

capabilities to locate and target coastal defenses and high technology weapons systems, such as the Exocet anti-ship missiles. It is also necessary to plan, allocate and coordinate the necessary amount of air and naval surface fire support assets to provide the proper protection and mitigate risk during movement from ship to shore.

Current Intelligence, Surveillance, AND Reconnaissance (ISR) Assets

Intelligence collection assets are vital to the success of forcible entry operations. These collection assets provide the required information to accurately locate enemy threat weapons designed to oppose an amphibious assault. The merging of intelligence systems provide the amphibious force the ability to detect threats and integrate all platforms and capabilities to coordinate and execute operations in today's environment.²⁴ The current system of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) provides the ability to integrate all available assets to identify and locate threats. C4ISR extends over all services and national assets. These assets include: satellites, U-2 aircraft, Joint Strategic Aerial Reconnaissance System (JSTARS), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and other fixed wing assets. The greatest role of C4ISR systems is the ability to rapidly facilitate the targeting cycle of find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess (F2T2EA) threats, and enables synchronized fires to destroy the threats and protect the force during the vulnerable assault phase.²⁵

Current Threats To Forcible Entry From The Sea

The current threats to an amphibious force executing a forcible entry are numerous and difficult to counter. The major threats that will be faced if a conflict occurs in the near future and the operational commander requires the use of an amphibious assault are: anti-ship missiles, submarines, and mines. The anti-ship missiles, the most common of which is the

Exocet, can be launched from all sizes of surface craft and shore locations. The Exocet is a threat because it can kill ships and the mobility of the various launch platforms makes it difficult to target and destroy.²⁶ There are two means to counter this threat. The first is reactive and relies on the individual ship anti-missile defense system, which is most effective against missile threats when employed in a collective layered defensive system with other maritime platforms. This system integrates sensors and reactive measures from all ships in the task force.²⁷ The second means is proactive, seeking to destroy the launchers and missiles before the ships deploy within the threat ring. This offensive measure requires precise targeting and substantial strike packages to eliminate identified and likely platforms. The combination of targeting and missile defense provides acceptable risk to the operational commander.²⁸

The submarine threat to amphibious forces is a complex problem. Submarines are easily procured by threat nations. Although submarines are increasing in numbers and technology, the problem is not insurmountable.²⁹ The U.S. and coalition forces have high-quality Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capability. Studies conducted during surface ASW exercises concluded that the combination of surface ASW assets employed to counter a submarine threat consistently accomplished the mission and either deterred or destroyed the submarine threat.³⁰ The incorporation of U.S. submarines in the ASW plan increases effectiveness of ASW by 25 percent.³¹ Amphibious exercises currently do not incorporate U.S. submarines into the ASW plan due to the limited availability and forward deployment of U.S. submarines. The U.S. needs to integrate submarines into fleet exercises conducting amphibious operations to improve ASW capability in support of future forcible entry operations.

The mine threat poses a complex problem. There are numerous types of mines that are hard to detect and exceptionally difficult to clear. Mine clearing is a time intensive operation and exposes mine clearing assets to air, sea, and shore based threats. Countermining operations are generally effective if deliberately executed and appropriately supported. Mine clearance efforts require detailed synchronization with the fire support plan and must be resourced with dedicated ships that can protect the Mine Counter Measure (MCM) platforms from threats. To be effective, the mine-clearing unit needs to focus on its primary task of clearing multiple lanes for the assault force to move from ship to shore. Currently the U.S. does not have a robust mine clearing and mine counter measure capability. Another option to defeat the mine threat is targeting the mine laying ships and mine storage areas to deny the enemy the ability to emplace the minefield. Finally, if there is a significant coastline, the mobility of the amphibious force will generate a dispersion of enemy forces and mines vice concentrating defenses at specific locations. The maneuverability of an amphibious force allows it to by-pass minefields.³²

There are diverse and significant threats that would be encountered in the execution of an amphibious assault. There are also capable U.S. and coalition actions to counter these threats. Synchronizations of intelligence will allow these threats to be targeted and fires will destroy or suppress the threats to allow maneuver of forces from ship to shore.

The Solution To Successful Forcible Entry Operations

*“Forcible entry operations are joint in nature. “Forcible entry” is a joint military operation conducted against armed opposition to gain entry into the territory of an adversary by seizing a lodgment as rapidly as possible in order to enable the conduct of follow-on operations or conduct a singular operation.”*³³
(Joint Forcible Entry JP 3.18)

Forcible entry operations are specified as joint operations conducted with a unity of effort to achieve specific strategic or operational objectives.³⁴ In today’s environment it is

essential for forcible entry operations to be a synchronized joint effort. Past case studies illustrate the need to execute these operations as a joint force. The landing at Inchon overcame significant shortfalls in assets by utilizing Army forces as part of the landing force and utilized coalition ships to provide the required lift capability needed. There was also a unity of effort and priority given to the amphibious operation in order to achieve the desired objectives. Illustrated in the Inchon case study is the fact that if a forcible entry operation is required, it is also required that the amphibious operation is the priority of effort for all joint and coalition forces. In today's resource constrained environment, it is necessary to protect the ships and landing craft. The effective synchronization of intelligence, fires, and maneuver mitigate the risks inherent in forcible entry operations.

Intelligence in support of Forcible Entry Operations

“Integrate supporting operations: Intelligence, information operations, civil-military operations, and special operations (SO) are key to setting the conditions for forcible entry operational success. These enablers must be integrated into the operation from initial planning through completed and transition.”³⁵ (Joint Forcible Entry JP 3.18)

Accurate intelligence is essential for the successful conduct of forcible entry operations. Integration of the intelligence capability of joint and coalition forces is necessary to be successful in forcible entry operations in order to reduce the risk to the Amphibious Task Force (ATF) and the Landing Force (LF). The Inchon and Desert Storm case studies cited the benefit of integrated intelligence capabilities. Inchon utilized Navy, Air Force, and coalition intelligence collection assets to analyze and collect environmental and threat information that was key to landing operations. The integration also provided targeting data and enemy disposition for the ATF and LF. The intelligence collection provided enemy locations for targeting by naval and air assets, which provided the protection for the ATF and LF required in establishing the lodgment and build-up of forces ashore. Desert Storm

showed the effectiveness of precise targeting of enemy assets and unit locations by the land force, this capability is able to be employed by an amphibious force.

C4ISR provides for the synthesis of intelligence collection systems to receive real time information and rapidly target threats to the ATF and LF. Synchronization of intelligence with national and operational assets enables air and surface fires to destroy or suppress enemy threats quickly, which is required to defeat current symmetric and asymmetric threats. The intelligence-targeting relationship protects the vital, scarce resources essential to successful forcible entry.

Operational Fires

Fires from aircraft (manned and unmanned) and/or naval platforms (surface/subsurface) take on added importance to compensate for the lack of artillery. The supported commander established the priority, timing, and effects of all fires within the boundaries of the operational area that has been designated.³⁶ (Joint Forcible Entry JP 3.18)

Proper synchronizing of intelligence collection assets provide targeting data needed for operational fires to destroy threat capabilities before they are able to engage the force, thereby protecting the vulnerable landing craft and amphibious ships. Fires are essential to destroy coastal defenses, suppress enemy weapons system to allow mine clearing operations, and isolate the landing sites from reinforcements during the critical phase of establishing the beachhead and building combat power to conduct follow-on operations ashore. Integrated and coordinated air and naval fire support plans shapes the battlefield prior to movement of amphibious forces into vulnerable locations by attacking vital infrastructure, enemy air assets, mine laying equipment, command and control, and air defense network. These actions are conducted during the shaping phase of the operation and utilize naval TLAMs and strike aircraft, Air Force bombers and strike aircraft, and coalition aviation assets. Dominance in this phase allows the ATF to approach the enemy coast and commence

isolation fires to protect the LF as it executes ship to shore movement. The assault and follow-on phases require continuous strikes, isolation fires and CAS directly supporting tactical operations. The success of the forcible entry operation depends on the integration of all available assets in a coordinated plan that is synchronized with the LF maneuver. This activity provides the required protection for limited, vulnerable assets until the landing force can establish organic artillery ashore to facilitate accomplishment of tactical and operational objectives. Without synchronized, effective fires, the amphibious ships and landing craft remain vulnerable and risk to mission and force would place in peril the success of the forcible entry.

Maneuver

The greatest attribute of an amphibious operation is the surprise that can be achieved through maneuver at sea. Surprise reduces the risk to the force and mission. The Inchon landing and the amphibious deception achieved during Desert Storm both generated operational surprise that facilitated success for the larger joint force. The Marine Corps has developed the concept of Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS). OMFTS envisions not only maneuver from ship to shore, but also ship to objective. This concept is fully developed, but the assets to conduct it are not fully operational.³⁷ The MV-22 Osprey is fielded to the operational forces, but the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) is still being developed. This concept can be utilized in conjunction with ship to shore maneuver by utilizing the MV-22 to penetrate deep into enemy territory and attack critical vulnerabilities of the enemy. Deeper movements from the sea provide additional protection and reduce risk to ships and landing craft by seizing key facilities and blocking avenues of approach for enemy reinforcements. Generating threats to rear areas will force a greater distribution of

enemy forces and reduce enemy defensive capability at the shoreline, providing essential time to establish the lodgment and flow of follow-on forces and supplies ashore.

Counter argument

There are many critics that argue against the viability of U.S. forcible entry capability in today's threat environment. The main arguments the critics present are: the U.S. Navy can't establish sea control against anti-ship missiles, mines, and submarines contesting the seas,³⁸ there are insufficient amphibious ships to conduct a large scale forcible entry,³⁹ and the landing craft do not provide protection for the landing force against modern weapons.⁴⁰ Although these arguments illustrate credible problems for an amphibious force, there are measures that can mitigate the risks to amphibious forces and allow forcible entry to remain a viable option. The critics only analyze the obstacles to amphibious operations in a one-dimensional critique. The critics do not look at all dimensions and capabilities that can be leveraged against the obstacles. Joint and coalition assets increase capabilities and assist in defeating threats to the force.

Threats to ships are mitigated or defeated through the combination of offensive and defensive measures. Intelligence collection assets provide unprecedented accuracy in locating enemy systems and synchronizing fires are capable of destroying the threats. There is sufficient amphibious lift to execute a forcible entry across the ROMO continuum, not including high-intensity conflict with near-peer competitors. Coalition forces contributions provide both amphibious platforms and additional assault forces. Two MEBs are sufficient to establish a lodgment and allow the flow of follow-on forces leveraging fires to isolate the lodgment. Landing craft are vulnerable to threat weapons on shore, but fires can suppress threats and mitigate the risk to the landing craft. LCAC and assault support aircraft allow a

portion of the assault force to bypass heavily defended areas, providing protection to the landing force.

The arguments against forcible entry are credible, but often one-dimensional. These arguments omit leveraging synchronization of operational functions to mitigate the risks. The integration of intelligence collection assets allow the joint force the ability to destroy the majority of the threats before they pose a risk to the force or mission. Operational maneuver from residual threats reduces the risk to an acceptable level for the operational commander.

Conclusion

Given the strategic environment and requirements described in the *National Defense Strategy*, the United States must be prepared to conduct forcible entry versus a number of adversaries across the globe. They also imply that forcible entry will likely be initiated on a compressed timeline, by forces concentrating from dispersed locations across significant distances, and with varying degrees of access within the operating area. The United States will not be afforded the luxury of time to marshal resources in theater, methodically set conditions for entry, establish lodgments and build up forces in order to conduct forcible entry.⁴¹

This paper presented a limited number of characteristics for successful forcible entry operations. Operational commanders need to rely on doctrine, current technology, and characteristics of past successful amphibious operations in looking to future forcible entry operations. The historical cases highlight many challenges that the amphibious forces surmounted. Today, highly interoperable joint forces are significantly better at synchronizing operational functions and their enabling capabilities. Opposed amphibious landings present difficult operational challenges. The operational commander needs to integrate, synchronize, and leverage available assets to execute a successful forcible entry. Forcible entry must be maintained to compel the enemy to defend everywhere; with current capabilities, this is far beyond the coastal defenses of Inchon and Kuwait. The dispersion of threat forces caused by maintaining a forcible entry capability increases the options available

to a joint force commander. Synchronization of intelligence, fires, and maneuver is the key enabler to maintaining a viable forcible entry capability.

NOTES

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